

Utah State University

**DigitalCommons@USU**

---

Blog Posts

Center for Persons with Disabilities

---

8-2-2010

## CPD Legacy Story: for the Love of Caitlin

Center for Persons With Disabilities

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cpd\\_blog](https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cpd_blog)

---

### Recommended Citation

Center for Persons With Disabilities, "CPD Legacy Story: for the Love of Caitlin" (2010). *Blog Posts*. 217.  
[https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cpd\\_blog/217](https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cpd_blog/217)

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Center for Persons with Disabilities at DigitalCommons@USU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Blog Posts by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@USU. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@usu.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@usu.edu).



## CPD LEGACY STORY: FOR THE LOVE OF CAITLIN

August 2, 2010 by cpehrson

This CPD Legacy Story comes from a loving grandmother, Irene Welch, staff assistant for the Research and Evaluation Division at the CPD.



Thankful grandmother, Irene Welch

On October 25, 2008, my granddaughter, Caitlin Mae Welch, 18 months old at the time, was diagnosed with an aggressive cancerous brain tumor called Medullablastoma. I do not believe there are words to describe the devastating feelings that encompassed my life and the lives of our family, that day, and for days and months after. I will never forget the phone call from my son, Jake, or the events that took place that day.

Jake and his wife, Erin, were told to rush Caitlin to Primary Children's Hospital where she was almost immediately taken into surgery to have the tumor removed. Thankfully, they were able to remove the whole tumor and she recovered quite well and came home from the hospital nine days later. Caitlin's quick recovery was miraculous, to say the least. She suffered very few complications from the surgery and progressed very well. In November, Caitlin started her chemotherapy treatments and radiation in the month of April 2009. On January 27, 2010, Caitlin finished her treatments and is on the road of a healthy and happy 3 year old.

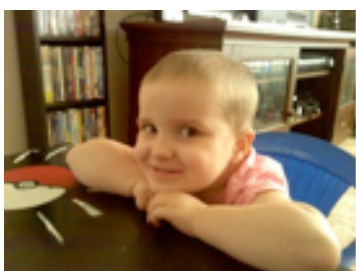
I asked Caitlin's mom, Erin, to give her thoughts on the Up-to-3 program and how they helped.

"The Up-to-3 program was really a great help to our family. Because of where the tumor was located, Caitlin, at 18 months old, was still not standing or walking on her own. The tumor had affected her balance. In November of 2008, Up-to-3 was kind enough to come to our house. Because of Caitlin's chemotherapy treatments, her body was often not strong enough to fight off germs and viruses, so we had to keep her at home most of the time. We sat down with Up-to-3 to discuss what gross motor and other skills that Caitlin was not able to do according to her age group. We set simple goals for her to work on, to stand on her own, take her first steps, and continue to work on her vocabulary.

Due to her chemotherapy treatments, Caitlin did not always feel up to working on her goals, but Up-to-3 was patient, kind, and understanding when we had to move appointments around due to Doctor's visits. I received handouts to help be an advocate for Caitlin's needs, and helpful hints to help her work on her goals.

They referred us to Cache Kids (the Logan Regional Pediatric Rehabilitation Center) to have Caitlin fitted for leg braces to help her with her balance, and a walker to give her confidence to walk on her own. They gave Caitlin tests to gauge where she was making improvements and to learn what areas she needed to work on more.

When Caitlin was well enough, she was able to go to gymnastics class at High Point, (through a partnership with the Up to 3 program) to get her used to walking on many different surfaces. During treatments, Caitlin was diagnosed with a hearing loss in her left ear, with the Up-to-3 program we were able to attend their sign language class. They offer many activities to help children with delays work on their skills in a fun and safe environment. A few of these activities include Wee Wonders, Transition Preschool, and Gymnastics.



Beautiful Caitlin Mae Welch

In January of 2010, Caitlin was finished with her chemotherapy treatments and was able to attend the Transition Preschool at the University (an Up to 3 preschool class), to continue working on her goals. I was also worried about her social interaction with other kids, since she had been homebound during chemo, and we always tried to be careful so she would not get sick.

She has improved by leaps and bounds. She is now walking and standing on her own, without a walker. She does still have leg braces to help her balance. Her speech is continuing to get better on a daily basis. She did really well in Preschool, being away from Mom and Dad.

I would like to thank all the people in Up-to-3 who worked with Caitlin and our family to help her through these disabilities. During this hard trial for our family, it was nice to have support from Up-to-3 and other families in the program who were going through the same things we were. Up-to-3 gave us hope and tons of help to ensure that Caitlin has a better life, and is able to accomplish things by herself and become more independent."

From Irene: "I have worked with the Early Intervention Research Institute and the CPD for 20 years. The kindness and generosity of the people is overwhelming and the work they do is amazing. Many people donated generously to help my son and his family.

"There is so much gratitude in my heart for the CPD, the Up-to-3 Program, and the Early Intervention Research Institute. Thank you all for your great work and generous hearts."